



# A Profile of White Center

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# Introduction and Overview

## A Profile of White Center

This report, which contains an overall picture of the community, is one of a series being prepared for the families of White Center. Some reports based on interviews with community residents have already been completed and are briefly described below. A future report will provide an in-depth look at housing conditions and opportunities.

This series of reports is an outgrowth of the national *Making Connections* program, established by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, to build connections between families and economic opportunities, social networks and services. *Making Connections* is the new centerpiece of the Foundation's long-term commitment to promote children's well-being by supporting families. The project's major objective is to help families identify what they really need and provide information so families can act as their own best advocates. The Seattle *Making Connections* site—one of 22 nationwide—has focused on the neighborhood of White Center. By presenting an overview of neighborhood data, we hope we can help sustain a community discussion that specifically addresses these issues.

In *A Profile of White Center*, we present the data available on several themes that were identified through interviews with White Center residents, most of whom are recent immigrants to this country. Thus, this report partially fills in a picture that was initially sketched by residents themselves in subject areas that they have identified as important.

### BUILDS ON THREE RELATED PROJECTS

*A Profile of White Center* relied on three other projects completed earlier this year. These projects gathered data specifically on the White Center community as part of the overall *Making Connections* process. Two of the three projects were based on qualitative data—that is, they presented information on common themes that arose from in-depth interviews with White Center residents. These reports are:

- *The Seattle/King County Making Connections Study Circles* (January 2001) reported on small “learning groups” brought together to discuss ways to strengthen families at a neighborhood level. The Study Circles document reported on in-depth interviews with 13 White Center residents, most of whom were immigrants or refugees, from a variety of ethnic heritages: Latino, Khmer, Vietnamese and white; as well as 13 Southeast Seattle residents of Eritrean, Cambodian, Oromo, and African American heritage.

**This report is a snapshot of White Center—a profile of the community’s geographic boundaries, diversity, economic well-being, schools, crime and health. It is a step towards providing additional information using the available data on areas of concern defined by the community. A brief description, in the form of data, of the neighborhood’s past and present is presented with the aid of maps, tables, graphs and discussion.**

*"I didn't speak the language when I came here, but I was determined to learn by myself. It took me five years to learn English well and to finish college. Then I was cut from welfare because I wanted to go to school and not just take a job as a cashier. I wanted more for my life..."*

*—a White Center resident*

- *Life in White Center* (February 2001) described the results of 14 interviews with members of the Cambodian, Vietnamese and Latino communities of White Center conducted in the participants' native language with bilingual interviewers. Although, as with the Study Circles report, the results are not necessarily representative of the larger White Center immigrant and refugee populations, they do provide an in-depth look at how members of these different communities feel about their communities and bring out common themes on their perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses.

#### SEVERAL MAJOR THEMES EMERGED

Several major themes on what families want emerged from the qualitative reports:

- **Decreased Isolation:** including language, maintaining ties to children and culture, connections with community and community institutions
  - **Increased Respect/Understanding from Children, Family, Community, Society and Self:** including maintaining self-respect, honoring traditional cultures, feeling understood and honored by society
  - **Increased Voice and Participation in Decision-Making that Affects their Lives:** including more community involvement, addressing a sense of powerlessness, seeing representation of views in larger decision-making, being sought out for participation
  - **Increased Safety and Stability—Physical, Emotional and Financial:** including reducing crime, increasing economic opportunities, and providing skills-transfer assessments and training
  - **Improved Education:** including better bus systems, parental involvement, and addressing the cultural divide
- The third foundation of *A Profile of White Center* was the collection and presentation by staff of Public Health – Seattle & King County of available quantitative data (counts, rates, comparisons and trends) on population demographics, crime, economic need and economic development, housing, education and schools. Public Health also presented data on traditional health topics such as maternal and infant health, births, deaths, hospitalizations, cancer incidence and communicable diseases. The data were organized by subject and gathered in a sourcebook, which is available for inspection on request. Most of the quantitative data for this report are from that sourcebook.

## THERE ARE NO LOCAL STATISTICS ON SOME THEMES RAISED IN INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

This report presents available quantitative data and statistics on the community concerns that were identified in the first two reports (described above) so that the data have as much value as possible for community members seeking a fuller picture of those issues. However, it's very apparent that, for some of these areas, quantitative data either don't exist or don't directly measure the area of community concern. For instance, although the 1990 U.S. Census has information on the language spoken at home by residents, there are no data on how the ties to children in immigrant families may be strained by more permissive U.S. cultural norms in schools, friendships and on the streets. In short, there is a disconnect between many of the areas of concern and data that can describe those concerns quantitatively. However, our report is able to present some data in the areas of Decreasing Isolation, Increased Safety and Stability, and Education. We also are including other significant health information that may be of interest or concern to the community.

*"I was always encouraged to study. My parents would say we don't live in luxury, but we teach you morals. When my dad asked me what I wanted to be, I said a teacher because I had a very good teacher when I was young who helped me to believe in myself..."*

*—a White Center resident*

## OUR REPORT IS ORGANIZED AS FOLLOWS:

- **White Center Boundaries, Residents and Housing:** An overview of White Center population, including neighborhood boundaries, breakdowns by age and sex, race, trends over time, the new 2000 U.S. Census data available at the time of publication, and housing.
- **Safety:** Police department, surveys and hospitalization data on violent and property crime.
- **Isolation, Financial Insecurity and Jobs:** Data on languages spoken, poverty and income equity, families needing financial assistance and job growth.
- **Schools and Youth:** Data on student demographics and languages, free and reduced lunch, dropouts and student body turnover.
- **Other Important Health Information:** The health of mothers, infants and children, reproductive health and adult health.

# Chapter 1

## White Center Boundaries, Residents and Housing

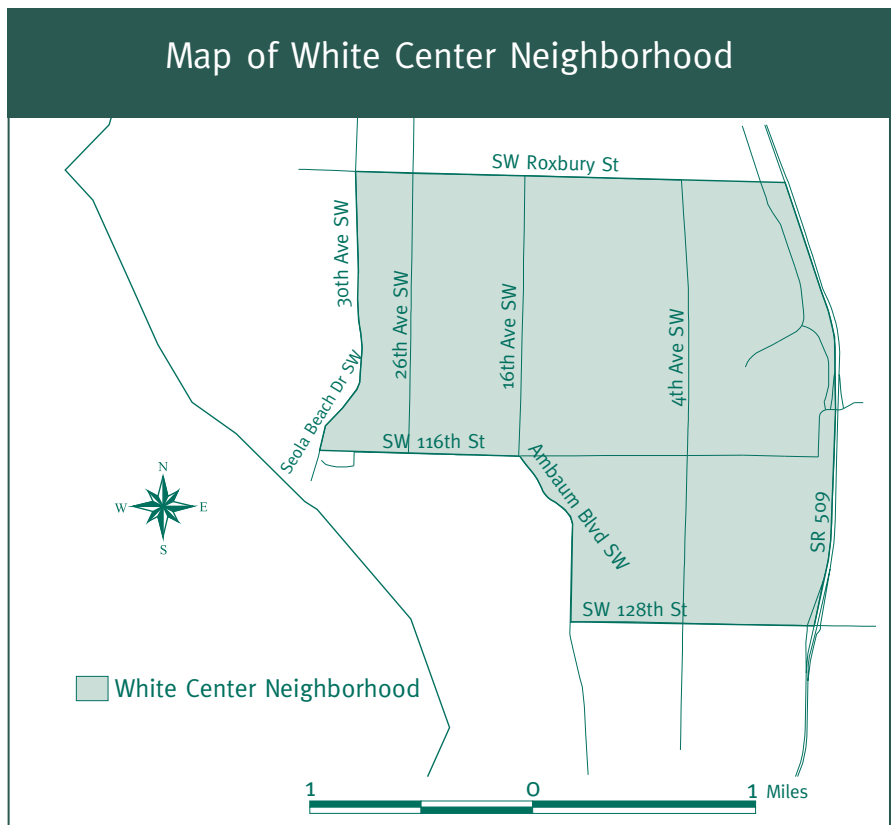
What are the Boundaries of White Center?

*The White Center Neighborhood is part of the unincorporated area of King County between the cities of Seattle, Burien and Tukwila. The neighborhood boundaries used in this report were chosen together by representatives of White Center community organizations, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Public Health – Seattle & King County. Those boundaries are (shown on this map in gray): SW Roxbury Street to the north, State Route 509 to the east, SW 128th Street/Ambaum Boulevard SW/SW 116th Street and the City of Burien to the south, and Seola Beach Dr/30th Ave. SW to the west.*

Precise geographic definitions like street boundaries don't exist for the data used in this report. Therefore, depending on the data source, we used ZIP codes, census tracts, patrol districts or school districts to make useable boundaries that are as close to the street boundaries as possible (see Technical Appendix for these additional maps).

### SUMMARY

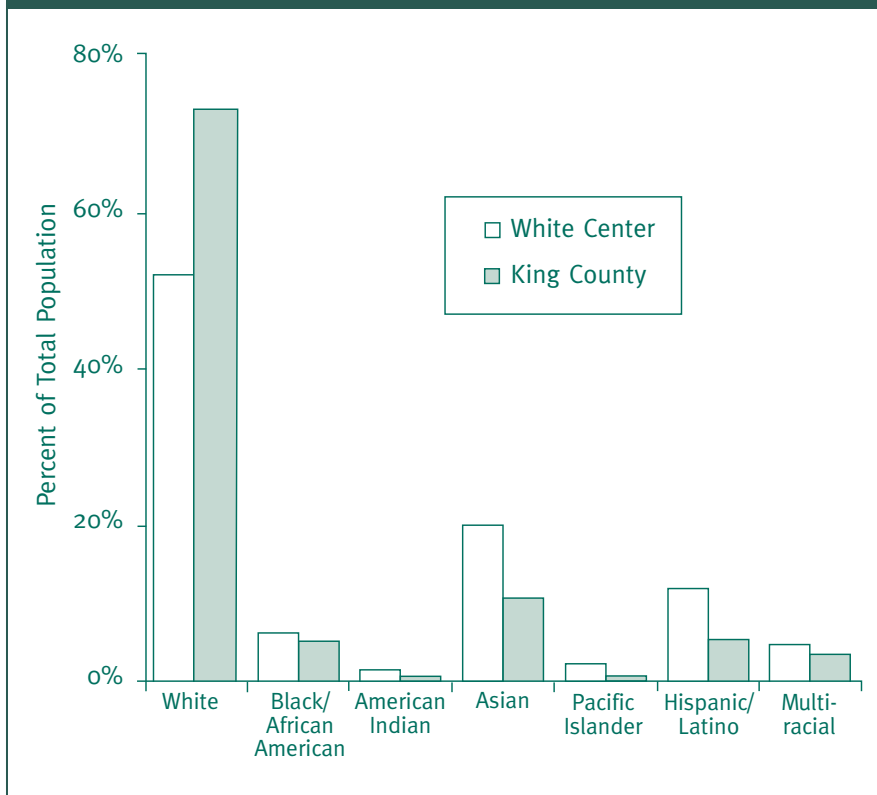
White Center is an unincorporated area between Burien and Seattle in Southwest King County. It houses a growing population with a rich and diverse cultural heritage. The 2000 U.S. Census counted almost 22,000 residents, a new high, with the growth in the 1990s coming almost entirely from increases in the Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino and African American communities. Diversity is also greater in White Center's children, with a doubling of the proportion of Hispanic/Latino children and smaller increases in the proportion of African American and Asian/Pacific Islander children. Residents of White Center are younger, on average, than the King County population as a whole, with a higher percentage of children and teens and a lower percentage of young and middle-aged adults, although the percentage of children may be on the decline. An initial look at housing patterns shows that White Center offers relatively affordable housing which continues to attract immigrants and refugees; a comprehensive report on housing that explores these issues further will be released in summer 2001.



## WHO LIVES IN WHITE CENTER?

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the total population of White Center is 21,957.

Population by Race/Ethnicity in White Center and King County, 2000



- *White Center residents are more likely, compared to King County residents, to be multi-racial: while 3% of the total King County population is of two or more race groups, 5% of the total White Center population and 9% of White Center children under age 18 are multi-racial. The 2000 U.S. Census is the first one that permitted residents to identify themselves as being of more than one race, so there is no data on multi-racial makeup for previous years.*

*White Center is a diverse neighborhood with several racial and ethnic communities. Data from the 2000 U.S. Census indicate that there is much greater racial and ethnic diversity in White Center than in the county as a whole. One in five White Center residents are Asian, compared to only one in 10 for King County overall. Twice as many community members identified themselves as Hispanic/Latinos (one in 10) compared to the county, proportionally. Also, a greater fraction of White Center is African American, Pacific Islander or American Indian compared to the County population.*

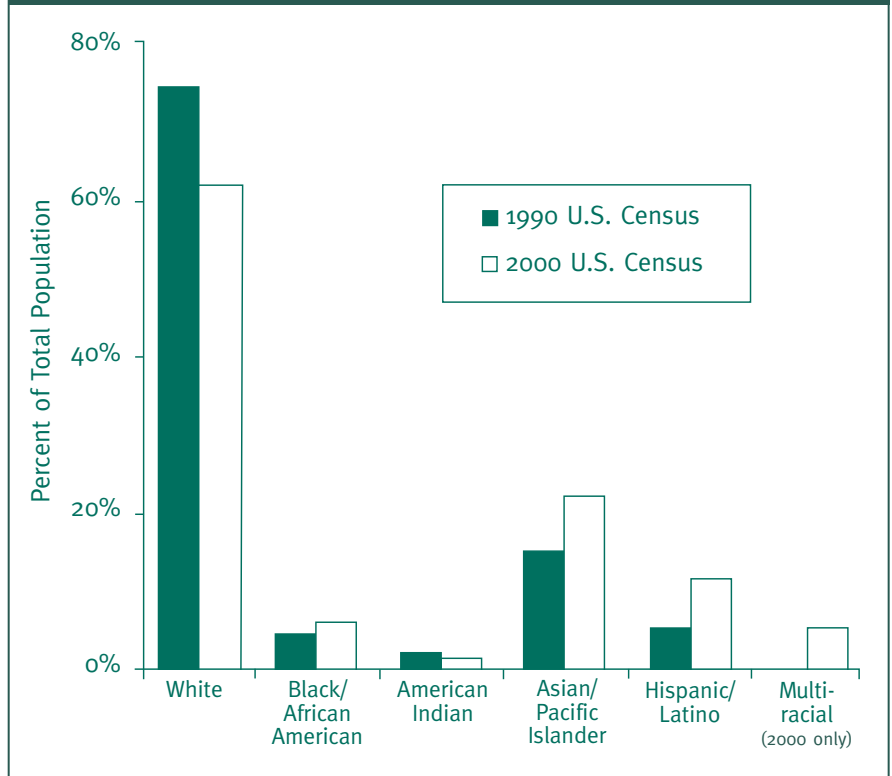
*"I like the minority communities. It helps me adapt to the schools and things like that. A good place for me would be a community with diverse population.."*

*—a White Center resident*

*White Center became much more racially diverse in the 1990s, with the proportion of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanic/Latinos increasing the most. The Hispanic/Latino proportion more than doubled, and the Asian/Pacific Islander and African American proportion grew by more than half.*

*"...(T)here is a Cambodian center located here and it is here to help ease the daily issues relating to Khmer people."  
—a White Center resident*

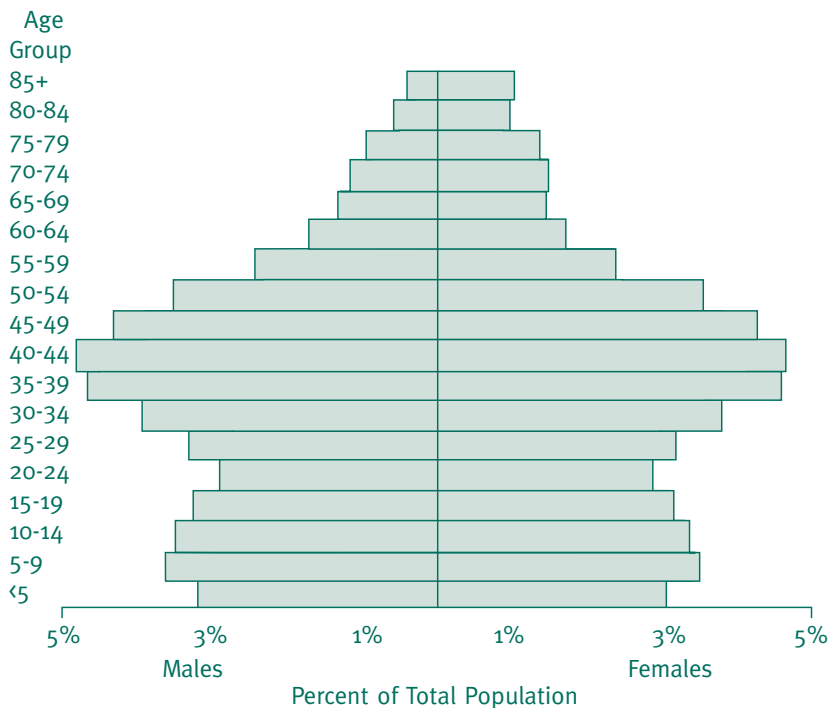
Population by Race/Ethnicity in White Center, 1990 and 2000



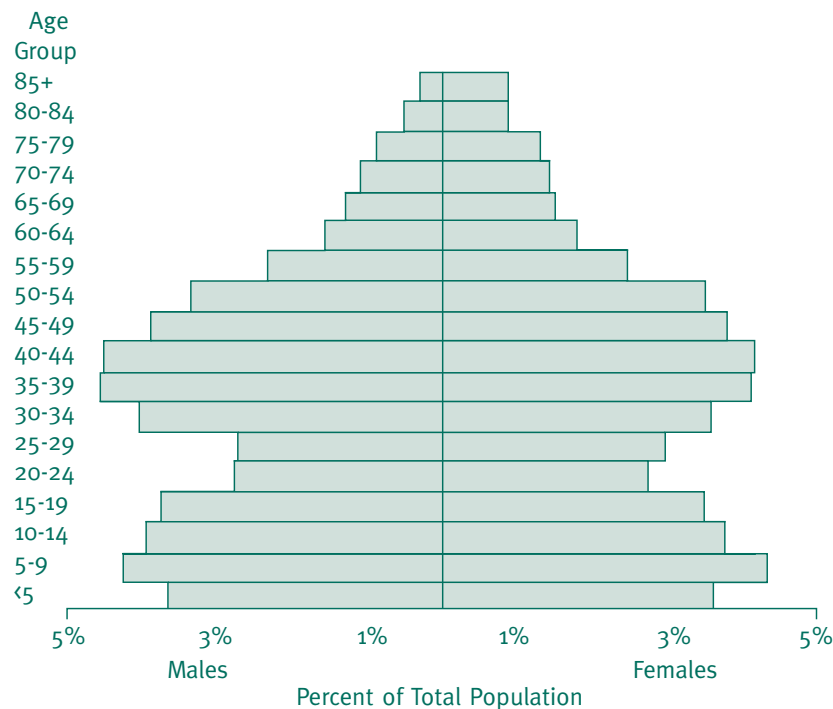
- *The population of children in White Center is also more diverse than it was in 1990. The proportion of African American children grew by half (from 6% to 9% of the total population of children), while the proportion of Hispanic/Latino children more than doubled (from 7% to 16%). The Asian/Pacific Islander population under 18 grew by one-fifth (from 22% to 27%).*
- *Diversity is a tradition in White Center. Diversity in the White Center population has been increasing since the mid-1900's. Significant numbers of African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos had moved there by the end of the 1970's.*
- *According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the largest Asian groups represented in White Center were of Cambodian and Vietnamese origin, accounting for 4.4% and 3.6% of the total population (respectively). More recent data from the 2000 U.S. Census on detailed race were not available at the time of this report's publication.*



### King County Population Distribution by Age and Gender, 2000



### White Center Population Distribution by Age and Gender, 2000



*Residents of White Center are younger, on average, than the King County population as a whole, with a higher percentage of children and teens and a lower percentage of young and middle-aged adults. Thus, there may be fewer singles and families may be larger, on average, in White Center, with a possibly greater demand for youth services. (Data that will help answer this question, such as marital status and presence and age of children, will be released by the U.S. Census in 2002.) More than one in four (27%) in White Center are younger than 18, and about one in 13 (7%) are under five (compared to 22% and 6% in the county, respectively). The percentage of children under five has been declining in White Center and King County for the last few years, and the Highline School District is projecting a decline in enrollment of 7.5% from 1999 to 2002.*

*White Center offers relatively affordable housing which continues to attract immigrants and refugees. One low-income public housing complex with two sites, Park Lake Homes 1 and 2, is located in White Center. There are 733 housing units in Park Lake Homes, combined. Two-thirds (66%) of Park Lake Homes residents are immigrants, with those born in Vietnam (269) being the largest immigrant group. The second largest immigrant population in Park Lake Homes is from Cambodia (89). There are 249 residents living in Park Lake Homes who were born in the U.S.*

*"It's a livable environment considering the housing was affordable and the community was quiet and safe."*

*—a White Center resident*

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS IN RESIDENTIAL HOUSING?

- *Park Lake Homes is more of a place for families with children and probably has fewer single people than does the White Center community as a whole.* The average household size in Park Lake Homes (3.0 persons per household) is larger than for the White Center population overall (estimated at 2.5). Almost half (45%) of Park Lake Homes residents are under 18, compared to one in four (27%) for White Center. Census figures on housing size for White Center and King County will provide a reliable update on this information when they are released in 2002.
- *Compared to King County, White Center has more of its population living in private homes.* In 2000, an estimated seven of 10 (72.1%) White Center households lived in single family houses, vs. about six of 10 (62.4%) in King County. There has been an increase in those living in multi-family housing units, such as apartment complexes, in both White Center and King County over the last three decades. This could mean a gradual, long-term change in the quality of life for White Center residents, with perhaps more people living with less family space or access to yards that private homes provide.
- *A comprehensive report on residential housing is being prepared as another follow-up step in the Making Connections project. Please refer to that report for an in-depth look at housing in White Center. We expect that report to be available in summer, 2001.*

# Chapter 2

## Safety

### SUMMARY

Rates of violent, property and domestic violence crimes are major factors in a community's sense of safety and stability. The data on crime in White Center have been mixed. There were an average of 147 violent crimes committed in White Center every year, and such crime may be a more common occurrence in this community. While serious assaults have decreased, other violent crime rates (such as rape and robbery) have held steady in the last five years of available data. Property crime was also reported more often per capita in White Center, but the overall property crime rate is on the decline. White Center car thefts held steady even as they increased in the County as a whole. There were an average of 16 police responses to domestic violence assaults per year in White Center. This is likely to be a fraction of the actual number that occurred since domestic violence assaults are typically greatly underreported.

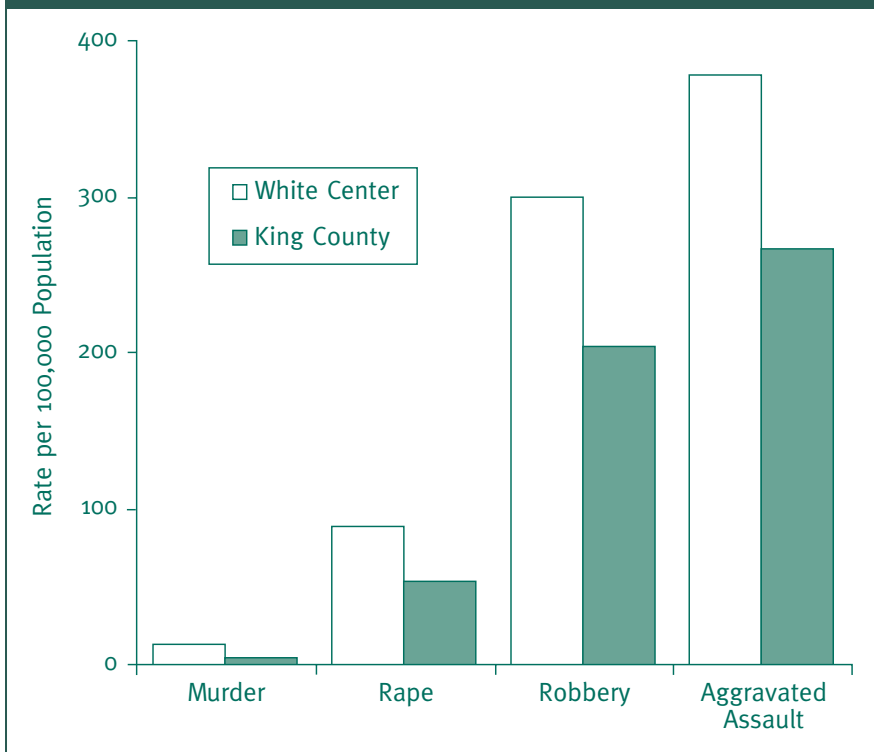
How many violent crimes are committed in White Center, and how does this compare to King County?

*The rate of violent crime from 1994 to 1998 was higher in White Center compared to the King County rate. The rate of rape, robbery and assault committed in White Center is 50% higher than the rate for King County. Hospitalization rates for assaults are also 50% higher among White Center residents, compared to King County (not shown in chart). There are about 14 assault hospitalizations per year to White Center residents.*

*There were an average of 147 violent crimes committed in White Center each year during this period. Violent crimes are defined as murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault (assault with the intent to injure or kill).*

*There were very few murders—about two per year—on average in White Center. There were about 16 rapes, 57 robberies and 71 aggravated assaults reported to police in the community per year.*

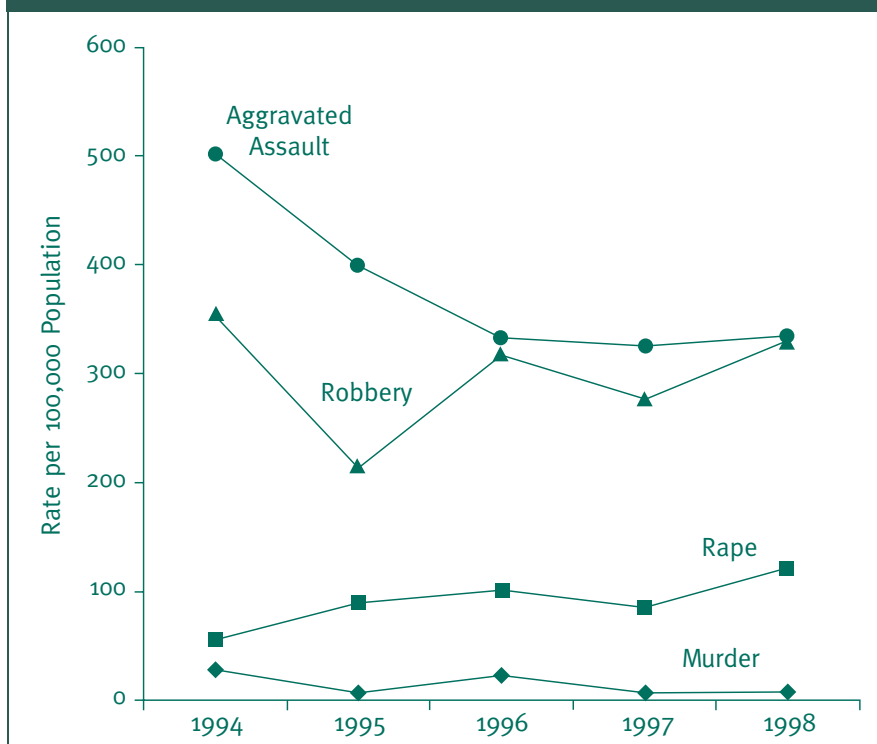
Violent Crime Rates in White Center and King County, Average 1994-1998



Are White Center residents really more likely to be victims of violent crime?

*Available information from police reports doesn't indicate where the perpetrator or crime victim lives, so although these crimes take place in White Center, both perpetrator and victim may or may not live in the community. However, the assault hospitalization rate counts White Center residents, rather than White Center occurrences. Because a similar pattern is shown by two different data sources, each one showing a different part of the picture, the answer to this question is probably "yes".*

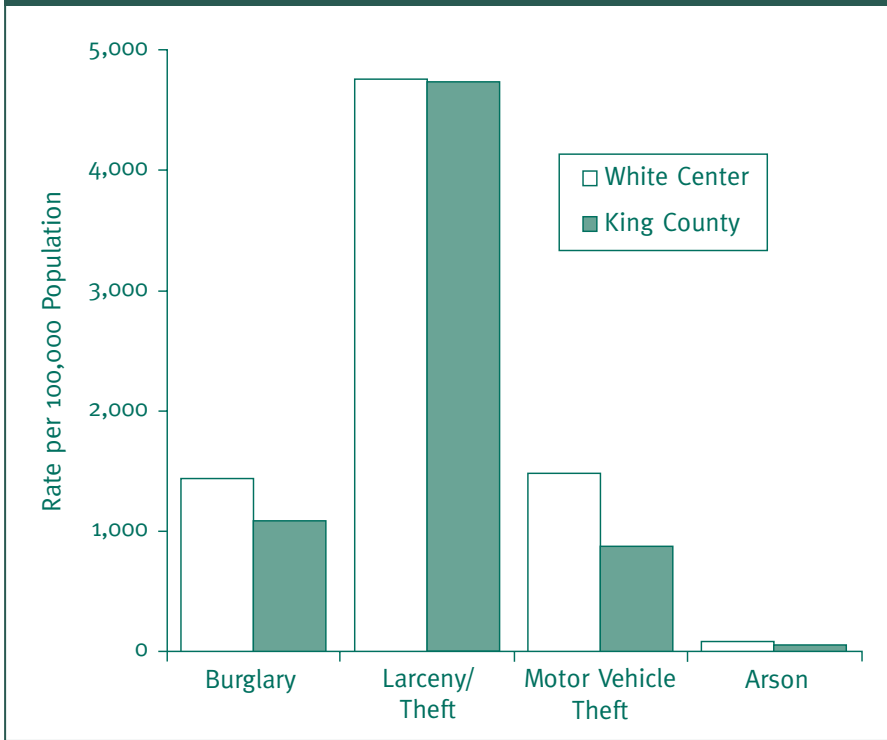
### Violent Crime Trends in White Center, 1994-1998



### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS IN VIOLENT CRIME IN WHITE CENTER?

- *Aggravated assaults have decreased from 1994 to 1998 in both White Center and King County (King County data is not shown in the charts for space reasons). The number of aggravated assaults has gone from 93 to 57 per year in White Center, and the rate has decreased by one-third, from 500 per 100,000 people to 335 per 100,000.*
- *Robbery and rape have held steady in White Center while decreasing substantially in the County as a whole. The rate for robbery in White Center has remained essentially unchanged at about 300 per 100,000 people (about 57 reports per year), while in King County the rate has decreased by 30%. Meanwhile, the reported rate and number of rapes may be increasing in the White Center community at the same time as rape decreased in King County by about 25%. Violent crime, and especially rape, should be closely monitored in White Center as more years of data become available.*

### Property Crime Rates in White Center and King County, Average 1994-1998



*Rates of burglaries, car thefts and arson were about 50% higher in White Center compared to King County from 1994 to 1998. The rate of larceny (e.g., shoplifting) is about the same as the King County rate.*

*“A good place to live is to have the neighbors keep their eyes out for each other. We should be keeping each other informed when witnessing any strange activities.”*

*—a White Center resident*

### IS PROPERTY CRIME, INCLUDING CAR THEFT, MORE COMMON IN WHITE CENTER COMPARED TO KING COUNTY?

- *There were an average of 1,461 property crimes reported to police per year in White Center. Property crimes include burglary, larceny (e.g., shoplifting), car theft and arson. There were 898 larcenies, 270 burglaries, 280 car thefts and 13 arsons per year.*
- *Car theft held steady in White Center while it increased by over 25% in King County as a whole between 1994 and 1998. There have been substantial decreases in burglary and larceny in both White Center and King County, by around 15% to 20%.*

*"I saw [domestic violence] happen to my parents; but fortunately, my mother was a person that believed that if this should happen to you, you shouldn't give any opportunity to let it happen again. Also, one should look for the well-being and protection of the children."*

*—a King County resident\**

## HOW MUCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS THERE IN WHITE CENTER?

- *There was an average of 16 domestic violence (DV) assaults per year reported in White Center in 1997 and 1998.* These are violent crimes reported to the police that involve family or other household members, or past or present intimate partners. Other studies show that only a fraction of violent DV crimes that occur are reported. Also, domestic violence assaults do not include psychological abuse.
- *A 1998 random anonymous telephone survey showed that one in four (25%) adult women in Southwest King County were victims of physical violence from an intimate partner at some time in their lives.* This survey grouped women in White Center with other women in southwest King County and Vashon Island.

# Chapter 3

## Isolation, Financial Insecurity and Jobs

### SUMMARY

White Center residents have to deal with economic hardship much more than residents of King County as a whole. With one in six living below the Federal Poverty Level, the poverty rate in White Center is twice as high as the rate for the County. Confronting lower household incomes more than others in the County, White Center families often have to watch their expenditures carefully and many may have difficulty affording life's necessities, both basic and life-enriching. Residents also face greater challenges in increasing their financial security, with a higher proportion lacking the education level necessary for getting a better job. Almost four in 10 White Center households with children are headed by a single parent, who must shoulder the main responsibility of caring for the family and making a living alone. These financial pressures result in some families' (including 675 children) in White Center needing Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF—also called Welfare). Meanwhile, the gap between rich and poor is wide, as it is in the rest of King County, raising questions on social policy and concerns about health.

The language barrier is more of a problem in White Center than elsewhere in the County, as indicated by old (1990 U.S. Census) and new (public school ESL enrollment—see Chapter 4) figures. Just how many in the entire White Center population are at risk of isolation from not being fluent in English will be known in 2002 with release of 2000 U.S. Census data on this subject. (Updated data will also be released on education level, income and poverty at that time.)

The number of jobs has been increasing steadily in White Center over the last 30 years, with the largest growth in the service sector. By 2020, one in every two jobs in White Center may be in the relatively low-paying service sector.

**White Center residents have to deal with economic hardship much more than residents of King County as a whole. With one in six living below the Federal Poverty Level, the poverty rate in White Center is twice as high as the rate for the County.**

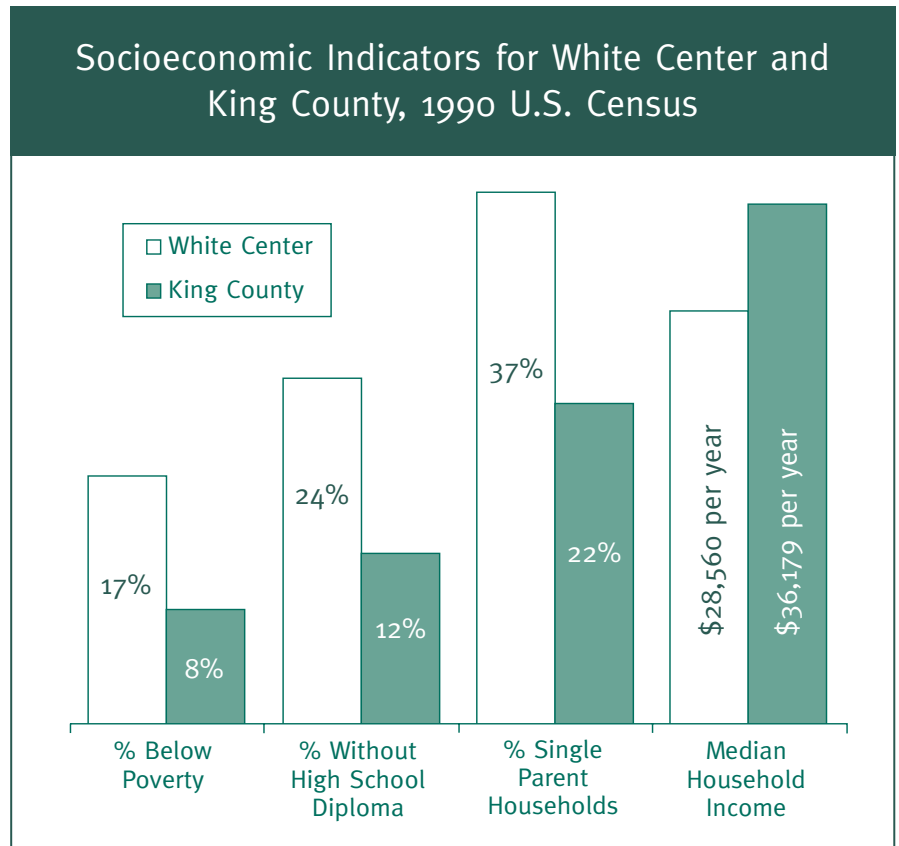
***"Poverty does not mean it's a bad community—what makes a community strong is knowing neighbors."***

***—a White Center resident***

*Economic hardship is much more widespread in White Center compared to King County overall. Based on the 1990 U.S. Census, more than one in six (17%) of White Center's population—over 3,700 people--live below the Federal Poverty Level, compared to fewer than one in 12 (8%) countywide. The Federal Poverty Level is a set of income thresholds that varies by family size. It is set by the Federal government and updated yearly to account for inflation. For a family of four in 2000, the Federal Poverty Level was \$17,601 (preliminary U.S. figures).*

*"I want education. I see how education leads people to better life style. I don't [want] to struggle finding work at McDonald's and certainly don't want to be working at McDonald's all my life."  
—a White Center resident*

## WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF FINANCIAL INSECURITY IN WHITE CENTER?



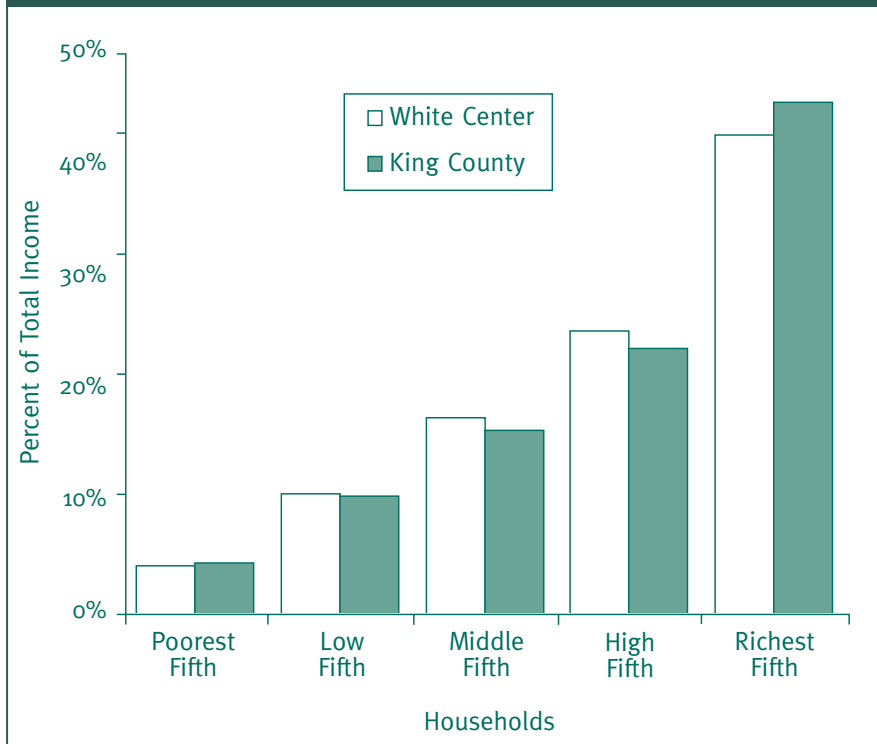
- *White Center families have to watch their expenditures more closely than their King County counterparts.* The median income for White Center households is one-fifth lower than for the County as a whole. Residents with fewer financial resources will have more trouble acquiring goods and services, both basic and life-enriching—for instance, cars and other forms of transportation, quality child care, leisure activities (such as travel and attending cultural events) and physical and mental health services. Lack of these services and life-enriching options can be isolating both within the community and in the greater society outside the community.
- *Residents of White Center face greater challenges in increasing their financial security.* Almost one in four (24%) age 25 or older lack a high school degree, double the proportion for King County (12%). High school and higher degrees are crucial to getting good jobs and improving life chances. Also, more White Center parents must face the difficult task of bringing up children and making a living alone:



almost four in 10 households (37%) with children are headed by a single parent in White Center, more than one-and-a-half times the King County rate (22%). Juggling family and work responsibilities alone can make it more difficult to get a high school or college degree and a better job.

- *Because of financial pressures, some families in White Center need and qualify for public assistance.* In September 2000, families were enrolled in Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF—also called Welfare) at twice the rate of King County families overall (3.8 per cent and 1.8 percent, respectively). Of the total of 951 people, 675 (71%) were children and 276 (29%) were adults. The adults were mostly enrolled in WorkFirst, the Washington State program designed to move adults from public assistance to jobs. Because this is a one-month snapshot, this is an underestimate of the total number of White Center residents who are enrolled in TANF at some time during the year.

Income Distribution in White Center and King County, 1989



- *The income gap is not a characteristic of White Center alone.* The income distribution for King County overall is very similar to the White Center income distribution.

*“As a working parent trying to keep the family together physically and financially, I find [it] difficult to commit enough time for my children.”*

*—a White Center resident*

*In White Center, income is far from equally distributed. The poorest fifth of households receives only \$1 of every \$20 of the community’s total income, and the richest fifth earns \$4 of every \$10 of the total income. Only the two highest fifths earn more than 20% of the total income. 2000 U.S. Census figures on income will show whether the gap is narrowing, widening or staying the same, when they are released in 2002.*

*The gap between rich and poor can fray the fabric of a community. Some recent U.S. studies have found that, as the income gap widens, crime rates go up, fewer people participate in civic activities and death rates increase for people at all income levels. Researchers are still trying to find out why mortality rates increase in all income groups as the gap widens.*

*Language barriers and cultural differences can be a problem for people trying to communicate with schools and access needed services. Vietnamese, Khmer, Spanish or Korean was the primary language spoken at home in a much higher fraction of White Center homes, compared to King County. (These figures are from the 1990 U.S. Census.)*

*“We kept within our family...We were used to Vietnam. We didn’t know anybody in the area and it was hard to meet people since we did not understand English.”*

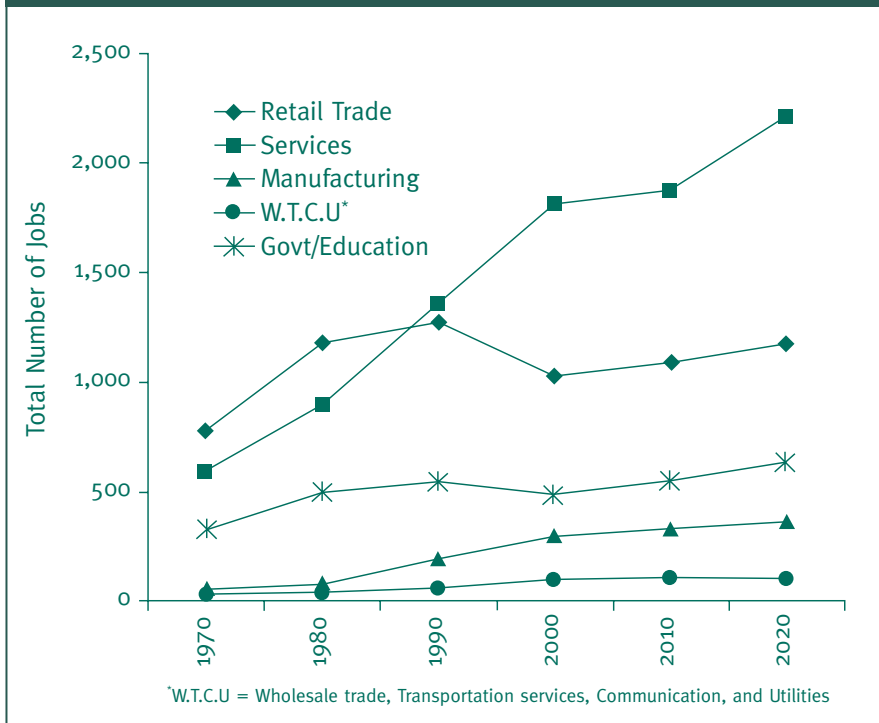
*—a White Center resident*

### Languages Spoken at Home in White Center and King County, 1990

	White Center		King County	
Language	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
English	14,407	81.2%	1,249,241	89.0%
Vietnamese	704	4.0%	8,719	0.6%
Khmer	633	3.6%	4,273	0.3%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	501	2.8%	25,932	1.8%
Korean	430	2.4%	10,420	0.7%
Chinese	197	1.1%	20,106	1.4%
Other Languages	865	4.9%	84,615	6.0%

- Data from the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program in Highline School District indicate that the percentage of people who are not native English-speakers is increasing (see Chapter 4 for more on ESL). Also, the number and percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics/Latinos have grown rapidly in the last 10 years (see Chapter 1 for more details). Thus, there may be an increasing problem of isolation felt by community members who are not fluent in English.

### Job Growth in White Center by Sector, 1970-2020



*In recent decades, the number of local jobs has increased steadily. From 1970 to 2000, the number of jobs more than doubled, from 1,764 to 3,685 (estimated 2000 data). We do not know how many White Center residents work in the community, or whether the proportion has been increasing or decreasing over time.*

- *Most of the recent growth has been in the service sector (probably relatively low-paying jobs with few benefits). These sorts of jobs include businesses like dry cleaning, health clinics, auto repair and nursing homes. The number of service sector jobs increased from 590 in 1970 to 1,796 in 2000 (estimated). In 1990, the number of service sector jobs rose above the number of retail trade jobs and became the biggest job category for the first time. The future projected increase in the service sector is much greater than for the other sectors of the economy. The Puget Sound Regional Council, a regional planning agency, estimates that in 2020 one of every two jobs in White Center will be in the service sector.*

# Chapter 4

## Schools and Youth

What schools are in White Center, and who are the students there?

*Six public schools are located within White Center boundaries and two other schools are located outside White Center but draw significant numbers of White Center children (see “White Center Area Schools” map in the Technical Appendix). These schools are Mount View, White Center Heights, Salmon Creek, Shorewood, Beverly Park at Glendale and Cedarhurst Elementary; Cascade Middle School; and Evergreen High School. All of these schools are located in Highline School District, which also includes a large area south of White Center. Data in this section do not include two private schools in the area, Shorewood Christian School and St. Bernadette’s, with fewer than 400 students.*

*“Schools themselves are good—what’s missing is the contact between schools and families.”*

*—a White Center resident*

### SUMMARY

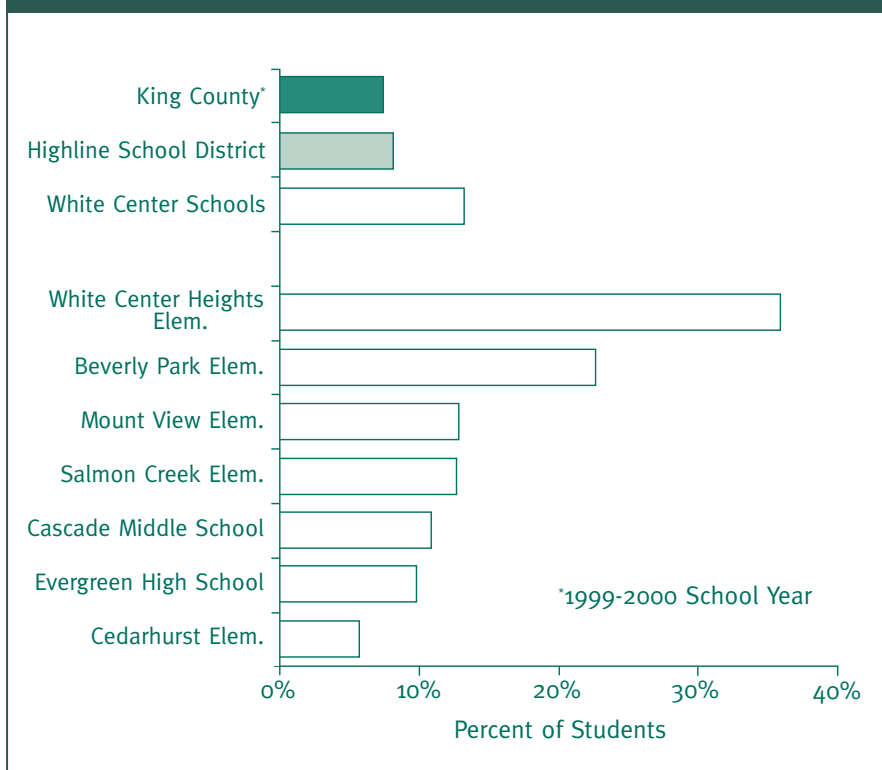
The eight public schools of White Center—six elementary, one middle and one high school—are very racially and culturally diverse. No one ethnic group is a majority, with white, Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino children forming the largest groups. Many of these students, particularly younger ones, face language barriers and are enrolled in English-as-a-Second-Language classes when they first attend school. Besides language challenges, a large majority of White Center students come from homes in financial need. One of three students also changes schools during the school year, causing instability by having to relate to different teachers, neighborhoods and friends. White Center children are more likely than those in King County as a whole to have difficulties completing school successfully and on time. White Center high school students drop out at over six times the rate of King County high school students, and White Center seniors do not graduate at almost twice the rate of King County seniors.

Students in White Center Area Schools, Highline School District, and King County by Race/Ethnicity, 2000-2001 School Year

	Total Enrollment	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
King County (1999-2000)	250,547	14%	2%	9%	6%	68%
Highline School District	18,024	20%	2%	12%	13%	53%
White Center Schools	4,411	33%	2%	11%	16%	38%
Beverly Park Elem.	511	24%	3%	14%	26%	34%
Cedarhurst Elem.	356	22%	2%	8%	15%	52%
Mount View Elem.	455	39%	3%	10%	19%	29%
Salmon Creek Elem.	397	45%	4%	10%	13%	28%
Shorewood Elem.	394	20%	2%	7%	8%	64%
White Center Heights Elem.	394	50%	2%	15%	17%	17%
Cascade Middle School	674	31%	2%	13%	13%	42%
Evergreen High School	1,230	35%	3%	9%	14%	40%

## HOW MANY STUDENTS FACE LANGUAGE BARRIERS?

Percent of Students in English-as-a-Second-Language  
by School, 2000-2001 School Year



- *White Center schools are very racially and culturally diverse. Of the over 4,000 children enrolled, no one racial/ethnic group is in the majority. If 100 children representing all of the students were gathered together, 38 would be white, 33 would be Asian/Pacific Islander, 16 would be Hispanic/Latino, 11 would be Black/African American and two would be American Indian. While a rich cultural mix can increase students' appreciation for other cultures, it may also lead to tensions between groups and strain the school administration's and teachers' ability to serve all of these groups.*
- *Some schools are much more diverse than others, with Shorewood Elementary the least diverse (64% white) and White Center Heights Elementary most diverse (17% white).*

*Many of these students, particularly younger ones, face language barriers when they first attend school. White Center schools have higher enrollment in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes (one in eight children) than do schools in Highline School District or King County (one in 12 in both). ESL enrollment is greatest in elementary schools. Shorewood Elementary School (not shown in chart) sends its ESL students to other schools because it has not established an ESL program.*

*"I feel bad that the language is in the way of the parents and teachers. Kids have to score 97% on a test to be in the Honors program, and some can't make it because of their language."*

*—a White Center resident*

*In Highline School District, four in 10 students speak Spanish as their primary language.*

**Significant numbers of ESL students also speak Vietnamese, Somali and Cambodian. In all, students with limited English-language skills speak 48 different languages in Highline.**

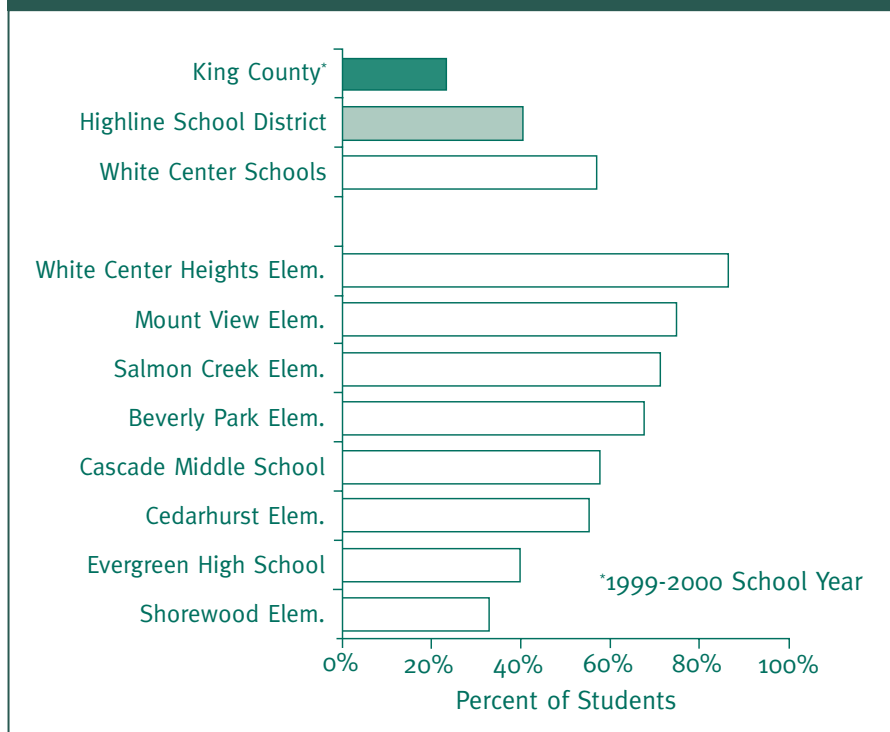
### Students Enrolled in English-as-a-Second-Language Programs, 1999-2000 School Year

	Highline School District	King County
Total Students Enrolled in ESL	1,789	18,366
Top 10 Primary Languages* in Highline School District:	% of ESL Students	
Spanish	39.4%	30.9%
Vietnamese	14.4%	10.7%
Somali	9.9%	4.8%
Cambodian	6.3%	3.5%
Punjabi	4.1%	2.3%
Samoan	2.9%	1.1%
Russian	2.9%	7.6%
Bosnian	2.5%	1.2%
Ukrainian	2.1%	7.0%
Hmong	1.8%	1.4%
Total Number of Primary Languages Spoken	48	114
*Other languages spoken by ESL students in Highline School District include: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Burmese, Chamorro, Chinese-Cantonese, Chinese-Mandarin, Chuuk, Czech, Dire, Eritai, Fallani, Farsi, Fijian, French, Ga, German, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Ilokano, Korean, Kurdish, Lao, Mien, Oromo, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Serbo-Croatian, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Urdu		

### HOW MANY STUDENTS FACE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES?

- *Almost six out of every 10 children in White Center schools are in low-income families enrolled in free/reduced-price lunch programs.* This is almost two-and-a-half times the free/reduced-price lunch enrollment in King County overall, and half again as high as Highline School District. A student in a family of four with an annual income of less than \$22,165 qualifies for free school meals; if this family had an income of less than \$31,543, the student would qualify for reduced-price meals. The program feeds over 2,558 White Center students.
- *Highline School District ranks among the highest of King County's school districts in families facing economic challenges. In 1995, 15% of Highline School District children (age 5-17) were in families living below the poverty level, just behind Seattle (18%) and South Central/Tukwila (16%) school districts.* Poverty rates will be updated by the release of U.S. Census data in 2002.

### Percent of Students in Free and Reduced Lunch Program by School, 2000-2001 School Year



*The overwhelming majority of students in White Center Heights (87%), Mount View (75%) and Salmon Creek (72%) Elementary Schools are enrolled in the free/reduced-price lunch program. These schools draw heavily from Park Lake Homes public housing. Meanwhile, Shorewood Elementary School provides free/reduced price lunches to one-third of its students. While this is the lowest percentage of White Center schools, it is still higher than the King County average.*

- *Many students must change schools during the year, probably because their families move for financial reasons or to be near friends or family. Many of these families may be recent immigrants who make a secondary move after arriving in this country. Almost one out of three White Center students does not spend a full year at one school. (We do not report King County figures here since some other school districts do not use a comparable method to calculate this measure.)*

*Almost four in 10 Evergreen seniors (37%) did not graduate in 1999-2000. These are students who either dropped out or need to repeat a grade. This is almost twice the proportion of seniors who do not graduate in King County (20%).*

## WHAT ARE THE DROPOUT AND GRADUATION RATES?

- *One in four students—295 children, or 24%—dropped out of Evergreen High School during the 1999-2000 school year. By definition, dropouts include students who leave school for any reason before graduation and who do not transfer to another school. Starting in 1999-2000, dropouts also included students who did not graduate on time with their class—probably a small percentage of dropouts. Dropout rates that use the new definition are not yet available for King County for comparison. However, children in poor- or near-poor families are more likely to have difficulties completing school successfully and on schedule. Some problems these children may confront are substance abuse, needing to work to help support the family, feeling isolated from school because of language or cultural differences, or having less of the self-esteem necessary for academic success.*



# Chapter 5

## Other Important Health Information

### SUMMARY

Like most neighborhoods facing serious social and economic challenges, White Center has more than its share of health problems in mothers, infants and young children. Mothers giving birth in White Center are less likely to have timely prenatal care (health care for the mother and fetus that is given early in the pregnancy) and more likely to smoke while they are pregnant. Although the percent of pregnant women who received late or no prenatal care or who smoked decreased from the late 1980's to the mid-1990's, in recent years these positive trends have disappeared. Relating to the health of children, White Center toddlers are hospitalized more often for asthma.

However, there have also been some positive trends recently for White Center teens. Sexually transmitted diseases in White Center teens have decreased by one-third to more than half, and the teen birth rate has decreased by almost half since 1993. While the downward trends are good news for White Center, these rates remain higher compared to King County as a whole.

Finally, there are opportunities for prevention of serious illnesses in White Center adults. Preventable deaths from smoking-related diseases and diabetes are higher in White Center residents. And increasing the number of women who get breast cancer screening tests, which is very low in Vietnamese and Hispanic/Latino women countywide, could help find cancers that can be cured because they are still in their early stages.

### CHILDREN'S HEALTH: ASTHMA HOSPITALIZATIONS

- *White Center toddlers aged 1-4 are hospitalized for asthma more often than the toddlers in King County overall.* An average of 10 White Center toddlers were hospitalized per year from 1997 to 1999, for a rate that was 14% higher than the King County rate. Asthma attacks can be triggered by breathing mold, dust mites, animal dander and air pollution, and other factors. Asthma hospitalizations are mostly serious and expensive medical events. Reducing exposure to asthma triggers and getting high-quality medical care outside the hospital can prevent most asthma hospitalizations.

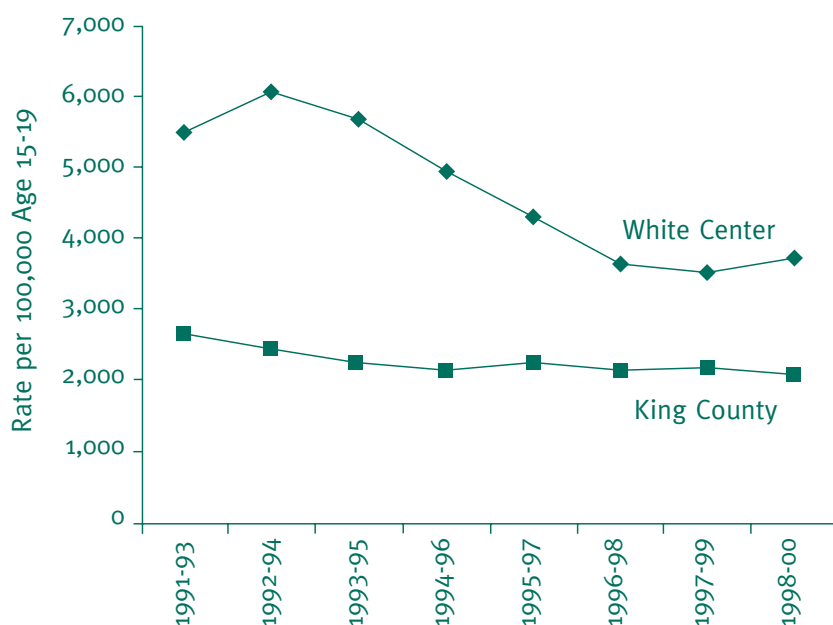
*There have also been some positive trends recently for White Center teens. Sexually transmitted diseases in White Center teens have decreased by one-third to more than half, and the teen birth rate has decreased by almost half since 1993. While the downward trends are good news for White Center, these rates remain higher compared to King County as a whole.*

*Chlamydia and gonorrhea have decreased in White Center teens since 1993, even as the King County rate has been steady. Rates of chlamydia in 15-to-19 year-olds decreased by 30% from 1993 to 2000. However, the rate is still almost twice as high as the King County rate. About 35 cases of chlamydia were found in White Center teens from 1998-2000. (We used rates in females since chlamydia in males is much less likely to be reported.)*

## TEEN HEALTH: SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND BIRTHS

- *Sexually transmitted diseases (like chlamydia or gonorrhea) may cause mild or no symptoms at first.* However, they can cause serious health problems (like infertility) in women if they are not treated, and they increase the chance of getting HIV, or AIDS. Sexually transmitted diseases are spread through unsafe sex and are an indicator of more generally of risky sexual behavior.

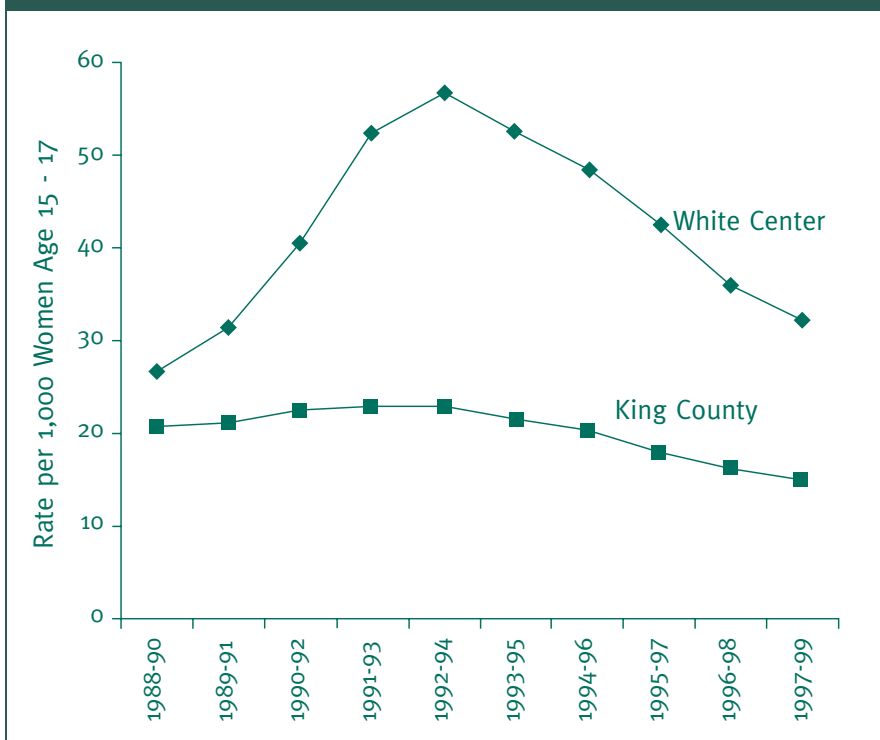
### Chlamydia Trends, Age 15-19\* in White Center and King County, 1991-2000



\*Rates shown are only for females. Because chlamydia in men is systematically underdiagnosed, female rates are considered to be more representative of the true incidence than the male and female rate combined.

- *Gonorrhea in male and female teens has declined by more than half since 1993.* In teen girls, it has declined by more than 90%. The rate for all White Center teens was more than twice as high as the rate in King County in 1993; in 2000, the White Center rate was only 1.6 times the rate for King County. There was an average of only four gonorrhea cases in White Center teens from 1998 to 2000.

### Adolescent Birth Trends in White Center and King County, 1988-1999



*The teen birth rate has decreased by almost half since a high in 1993. (For births, teens are defined as school-age, or 15 to 17 years old.) From 1997 to 1999, there was an average of 15 teen births. However, the birth rate in White Center teens is still 2.3 times the rate for King County.*

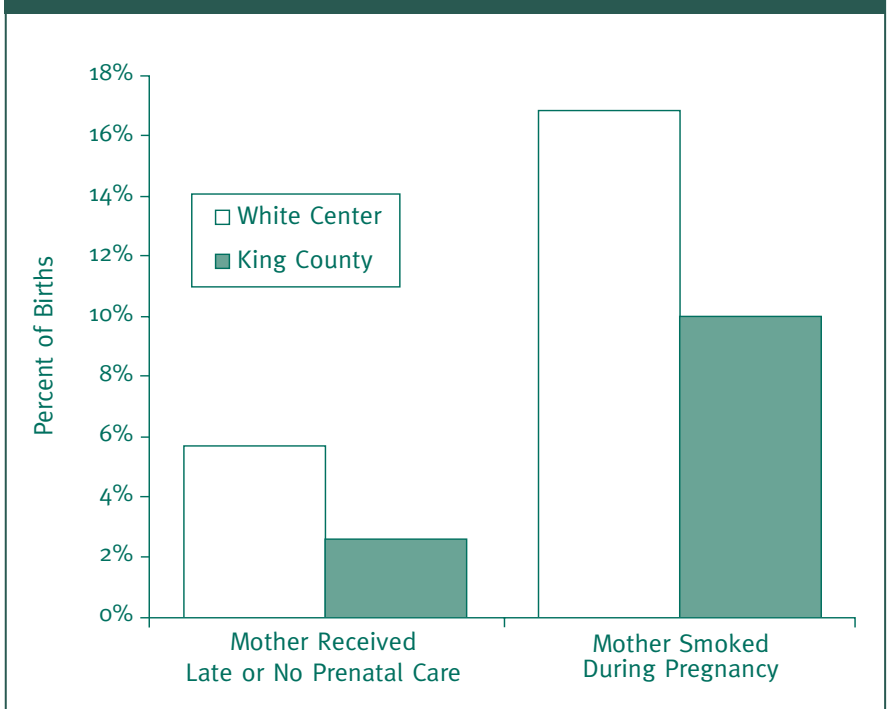
- *The decrease in teen births and sexually transmitted diseases is very good news for White Center.* The decrease in births and sexually transmitted diseases may be related to extended hours at the White Center Public Health Center, prevention programs like Partners in Action for Teen Health and community-based organizations like Planned Parenthood. These programs may also have affected the decrease in sexually transmitted diseases through referral to health care providers. However, because the rates remain higher than the King County rates, they are cause for concern.

*White Center women who gave birth did not get timely prenatal care at twice the rate of King County mothers. In six of every 100 births between 1997-1999, pregnant women made their first prenatal health care visit in the seventh month or later, or didn't get any prenatal care before birth. From 1997 to 1999, there was an average of 277 births each year to White Center mothers; there was late or no prenatal care in 16 of those births. Timely prenatal care can reduce the risk of infants being born with low birthweight (which can cause problems in breathing or the nervous system for the baby) or dying during their first year of life.*

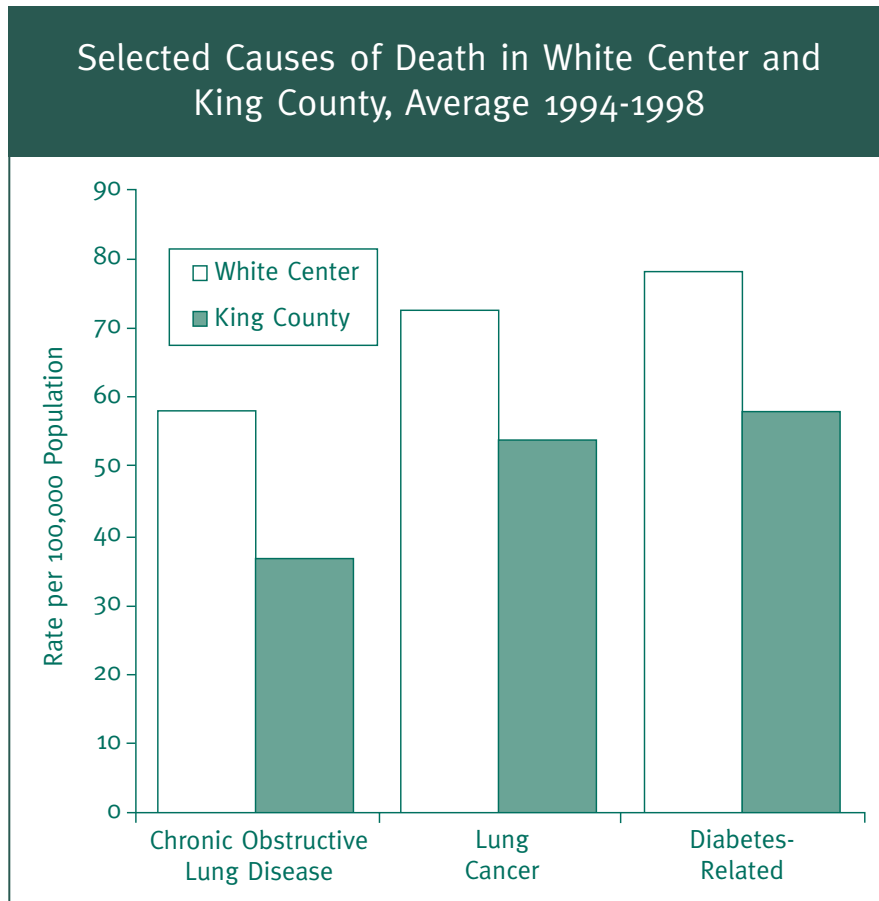
## MOTHERS' AND INFANTS' HEALTH: PRENATAL CARE AND MATERNAL SMOKING

- *Mothers smoked during pregnancy in more than one of every six births—an average of 54 births per year. This is over one-and-a-half times the maternal smoking percentage for King County (one of every 10 births). Smoking during pregnancy can cause low birthweight and infant death, as well as a wide range of serious diseases in the mother.*
- *Positive trends seen in White Center from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s have disappeared in the last five years. Rates of late/no prenatal care and maternal smoking decreased from 1987 to the mid-1990s. However, rates from the mid-1990s through 1999 have not improved.*

Birth Risk Factors in White Center and King County, Average 1997-1999



## ADULT HEALTH: DEATHS FROM SMOKING AND DIABETES



*Preventable deaths from smoking-related diseases are higher in White Center residents. The death rate from lung cancer was 1.4 times the King County rate, and there were about 12 lung cancer deaths each year in White Center residents between 1994 and 1998. Deaths from chronic obstructive lung disease (COLD), a non-cancer disease including emphysema, were over 1.5 times higher in White Center compared to King County. There were 10 deaths to White Center residents from COLD during this period. Almost all lung cancer and COLD deaths are in those with a history of cigarette smoking.*

- *The rate of deaths related to diabetes was 1.3 times higher in White Center residents compared to King County from 1994 to 1998. There were 14 diabetes-related deaths to White Center residents during this period. (These are deaths where a doctor has listed diabetes as the main cause or a related cause of death.) Diabetes deaths can be prevented by changes in diet and exercise habits and access to high quality medical care.*

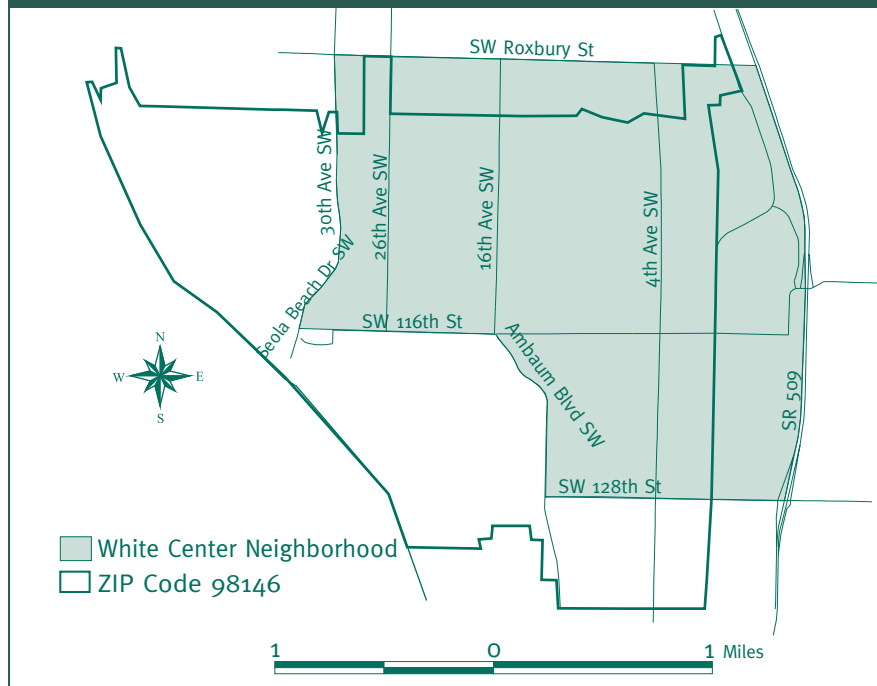
*The King County Breast and Cervical Health Program (BCHP) provides free breast cancer screening for women who are low income and uninsured or under-insured. Since July 1994, the program enrolled 255 women living in White Center.*

## ADULT HEALTH: SCREENING FOR BREAST CANCER

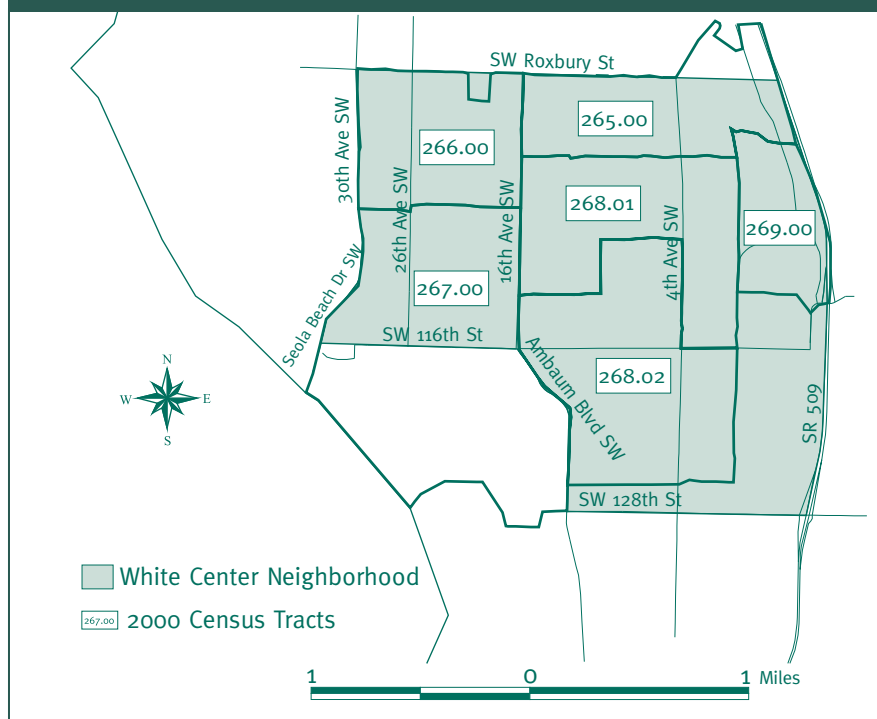
- *There were more breast cancers found than any other type of cancer in women of White Center and of King County overall. But a recent survey found that screening for breast cancer was dramatically lower among women of Vietnamese and Hispanic/Latino heritage in King County. Less than one in five women (18%) age 50 and older had the recommended screening, a mammogram and clinical breast exam, compared to over two in three women (67%) age 50 and older in King County overall. For Hispanic/Latino women, the proportion was less than one in two women (46%). Screening for breast cancer has been found to prevent deaths by catching breast cancer before it spreads in the body and becomes more deadly.*
- *There was an average of six breast cancers each year diagnosed in the late stage (after they have spread) in White Center women between 1994 and 1998. Although we do not have the race/ethnicity of the cases, some or all of these cases may have been caught earlier with appropriate screening, regardless of race/ethnicity.*

# Technical Appendix

## White Center Neighborhood and 98146 ZIP Code



## White Center Neighborhood and Census Tracts



## Neighborhood Boundaries for Data Analysis

*For each type of data, the White Center area may be defined in a slightly different way. For example, hospitalization data are only available by ZIP Code. Data on the age, gender, and race/ethnicity of the population are available by census tract. The characteristics of public school children are either provided on an individual school level, or for the entire school district. For this report, the White Center Neighborhood is defined by all of the following geographic areas, depending on the type of data used. The maps show how close those areas are to the actual neighborhood boundaries.*

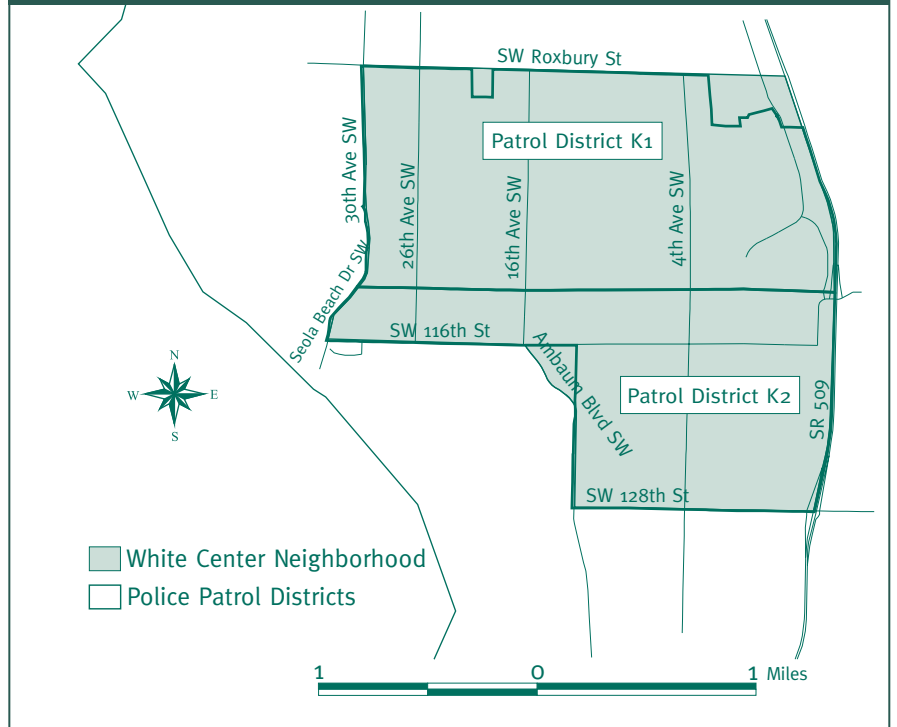
**ZIP Code: 98146**

**2000 U.S. Census Tracts: 265.00, 266.00, 267.00, 268.01, 268.02, 269.00**

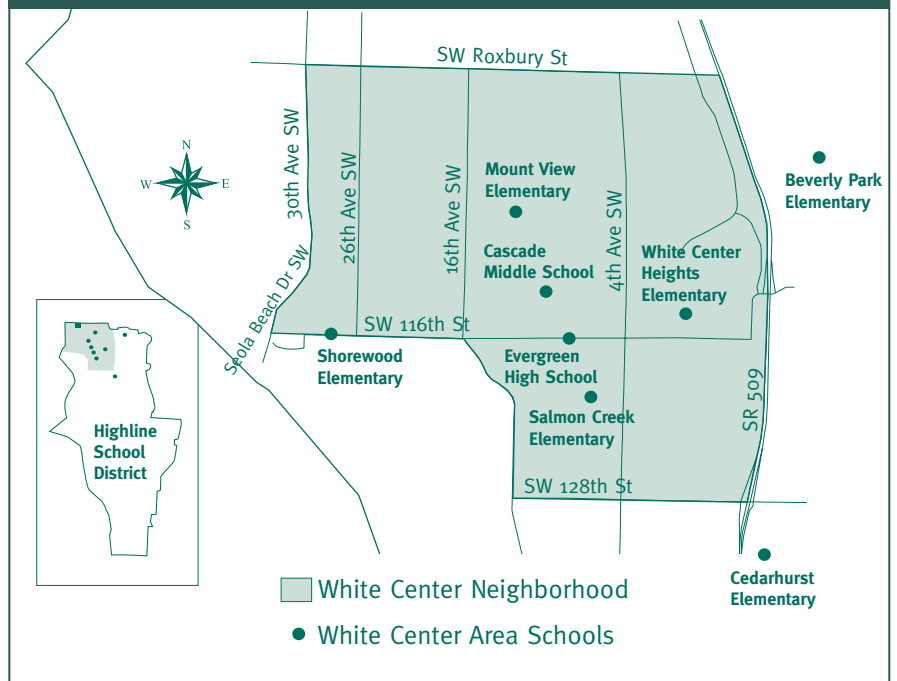
**King County Police Precinct 4,  
Patrol Districts: K1 & K2**

*White Center lies within the Highline School District. With the help of administrators from the school district and the Puget Sound Educational Service District, we determined which public schools are either within the White Center area, or draw heavily from the White Center area for their students. Data about public school students are presented for individual schools and all White Center area schools combined.*

## White Center Neighborhood and King County Police Patrol Districts



## White Center Area Schools and Highline School District (inset)





## RACE/ETHNICITY AND THIS REPORT

In this report, we present 2000 U.S. Census data on the following race/ethnicity categories: White, Black/African American, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino and Multi-racial. For the first time, people could check more than one option on the official Census form, so there is detailed information available on overlapping and multiple racial/ethnic identifications. For reasons of simplicity and space, we chose to present race/ethnicity on the above mutually exclusive categories. For more detailed information on race/ethnicity, see the Census web address (<http://www.census.gov/>) or contact us at 206/296-6817.

In recent years, the use of traditional race and ethnic categories to describe populations has increasingly come into question. We present data by race/ethnicity because we believe it is a marker for complex social, economic, and political forces that are important influences on community and individual health. Most communities of color in this country have experienced social and economic discrimination, which can negatively affect the health of those communities. However, other socioeconomic characteristics, such as poverty and lack of English proficiency, may create similar disadvantages. We hope this understanding will lead to strategies that address these issues, as well as the social and economic inequities that underlie them.

## DATA SOURCES

Population Counts and Estimates by Race, Gender and Age: *1990 U.S. Census, 2000 U.S. Census, and Washington State Adjusted Population Estimates (Department of Social and Health Services, July, 2000).*

Population counts from the U.S. Census were used wherever possible. However, actual counts by gender and age groups are not yet available from the 2000 U.S. Census, so population estimates for the year 2000 were also used. Because these estimates are anchored in 1990 U.S. Census figures, the farther out from 1990 the estimates extend, the less accurate we can expect them to be. This is especially true for small areas such as White Center.

Average Household Size and Single/Multi-Family Housing: *Puget Sound Regional Council, 1999 Population and Employment Working Forecasts, Central Puget Sound Region.*

Resident Population of Park Lake Homes: *King County Housing Authority, Park Lake Homes, 2000 Demographics*. Figures for Park Lake Homes sites I and II were combined.

Violent and Property Crimes, and Domestic Violence: *King County Sheriff's Office, Annual Police Services Report (White Center data) and Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Washington State Uniform Crime Reports (King County data)*.

Assault Hospitalizations: *Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics*.

Language Spoken at Home and Other Socioeconomic Indicators: *1990 U.S. Census*. Within the next 2 years, updated data from the 2000 U.S. Census will be available.

Social Service Recipients (TANF and WorkFirst): *Washington State Department of Social and Health Services*.

Jobs: *Puget Sound Regional Council, 1999 Population and Employment Working Forecasts, Central Puget Sound Region*. These data include all part-time and full-time jobs located in White Center, except in resources (agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining) and construction.

Student Population by Race/Ethnicity: *Highline School District, Form P-105A, October 2, 2000* (White Center schools and Highline School District, 2000-2001), and *Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (King County, 1999-2000)*.

English As a Second Language (ESL): *"Educating Limited-English-Proficient Students in Washington State". Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia, WA, December 2000* (ESL enrollment by language, 1999-2000), *Highline School District, Enrollment Report P223, November 1, 2000* (White Center schools and Highline School District ESL enrollment, 2000-2001), and *Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction web site*, (King County ESL enrollment, 1999-2000). ESL enrollment is partially determined by parental permissions and school resources.

Free and Reduced Lunch Program: *Highline School District, Nutritional Services (White Center schools, 2000-2001), and Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction web site* (King County and Highline School District, 1999-2000).

Student Mobility: *Highline School District Research and Evaluation Department, Turnover Factor*. In Highline School District, mobility (or turnover) is calculated as the total number of students who entered late or left early (after the first day of the school year), divided by the total number of students enrolled at any time during the school year.

Graduation and Dropout Percents: "*Dropout Rates and Graduation Statistics by County and School District for School Year 1998-1999*". *Washington State of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia, WA, March 2001* (King County and Highline School District, 1998-1999), and *Lora Giboney, Highline School District Research and Evaluation Department, personal communication, 11/00* (Evergreen High School, 1999-2000).

Teen Births, Birth Risk Factors, Selected Causes of Death, Childhood Asthma Hospitalizations, Cancer Incidence, and Sexually Transmitted Disease: *Washington State Department of Health*.

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Pramila Jayapal. *The Seattle/King County Making Connections Study Circles: A Report on the Vision, Process, and Learnings of Two Study Circles*. Prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, January 2001.

Kirsten Senturia, Marianne Sullivan, Sandy Ciske and Sharyne Shiu-Thornton. *Cultural Issues Affecting Domestic Violence Service Utilization in Ethnic and Hard to Reach Populations*, Public Health-Seattle & King County and participating agencies, October 2000.



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